

Author: Priscilla Reisinger

Event Response – Exhibition Opening: When I arrived at the Faculty Exhibition and World of Yugen opening receptions I saw a good amount of people mingling in the link gallery around the food and drinks having one-on-one or group discussions. I had never been to an opening at Krannert so I was unsure about the protocol for drinking and eating so I decided to pass it up altogether. I walked through the glass doors into the museum and began to explore the World of Yugen exhibition first. After walking through the first exhibit I went on to the Faculty Exhibition in the larger room, in which there was a considerably larger crowd. I soon found myself “people-watching” as much or more than I was considering the artworks. I surmised that the audience was primarily the faculty members with their families and friends and Art and Design students who had been encouraged to attend or went out of their own interest. I found I recognized many of the students from previous classes.

Art Exploration: Copy after Cornelius van Haarlem (1562–1638), Dutch

Love or Money, 1594

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. Louis Moss 1961

The first time I saw the painting, *Love or Money* it didn't really stand out much from the other European paintings and portraits of people I'd seen before. I've walked past it many times before – but this time as I walked through the bow gallery the dynamics of the interactions of the characters caught my attention. The woman is in an embrace with a rather handsome looking man – who is gazing intently into her 'sweet' face. She however is looking off into the space and thought – obviously contemplating something. On the other side of her is another man – reaching out to her with question in his eyes. She has not acknowledged him in this scene – but the viewer can tell she is obviously thinking about what he has to offer. This second suitor is not as handsome as the first – he seems possibly older and slightly chubbier and sports a couple moles on the side of his face. He is,

however in contrast with his competition, holding a small burlap bag of what seems to be money.

Based on my limited knowledge of European social history, it could be that this decision is actually a very practical and serious decision. However when I look at the painting it is almost comical to see both of her suitors wooing her at the very same time. I wonder if this would this actually take place in real life. Or is the artist just trying to help the viewer understand the reality of this situation?

When I look at this painting it makes me think of my own decision to choose a career that I would love and that would be fulfilling – as opposed to one that would make lots of money and make me rich. And although I would never decide to marry a man based on his salary, I can still relate to the practicality of this woman's deliberation over her future security. Should she marry the man that she is head over heels for, makes her laugh, and brings flowers picked from the wild because he has no money to purchase them? Or should she marry the older gentleman who she barely knows and has been proposing to her now for years by bringing expensive gifts to her and her family?

Based on the artist information provided by the Krannert Art Museum I can conclude that the artist painted on canvas using oil paints. His brush strokes are not very visible so would guess he was attempting to conceal them in order to let his subjects speak louder than his artistic process. He must have paid very close attention to his subjects because the expressions he painted on their faces are very believable and realistic. The woman's expression is nearly perfect, and one can almost imagine exactly what is going through her mind. Also, the artist arranged the composition using the rule of thirds – placing more emphasis on the woman and her poor young suitor on the right. The wealthy suitor reaches out to the pair (more specifically the woman) from the left, taking up most of the left side of the painting. However, because the young woman is in the center, and she is a minority among the subjects, she engages the viewer and is therefore the focal point of the painting. The lighting in the painting is very muted and seems to come from behind the rich suitor, casting a glow on the love-

struck pair. The colors the artist uses are muted and dark as well with the exception of her yellow dress which helps to save the painting from being completely murky. The textures of the subjects' clothing and bodies are painted smooth and soft. One gets the impression that this is a silent moment frozen in time where no words are spoken and only thoughts take place. Perhaps the artist painted the moment after all words and proposals have been spoken and now the young woman must make her decision.

While considering the artist, it is interesting to me that a male artist was so apt at capturing this plight of the woman. He must have been very sensitive to the social quandary that women of his day and age faced. Perhaps he had been commissioned by a woman who had made one such difficult decision herself. Or perchance this starving artist himself had been spurned in love by a woman who chose a wealthier suitor.

Questions:

Can anyone guess what the title of this painting might be? (without looking at the card)

Please explain why you chose that title.

What are some clues or hints the artist gives to lead you to know what is going on? (i.e. money bag – How do we even know if it is money? Is it a symbol of wealth?)

Who are the characters/subjects in this painting?

Do you think there is a main subject in this painting?

Who do you think it is, and why?

Can you imagine what the suitor on the left is thinking?

Can you imagine what the suitor on the right is thinking?

What might the young woman be thinking?

Whom do you think she will choose?

What is this woman's dilemma?

Can you relate to this woman's dilemma?

Do you think this is still a common/relatable issue today?

Why or why not?

What do you think occurred right before this picture?

Was there dialogue? What was said?

What do you think happens next?

Keywords:

Object Guide:

Priscilla Reisinger

Object Guide

Copy after Cornelius van Haarlem (1562–1638), Dutch

Love or Money, 1594

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. Louis Moss 1961

This turn of the 15th century Dutch oil painting titled, *Love or Money* depicts a frontal and profile portrait view of three figures from the mid-waist up. The subjects, one woman and two men (one on either side of her) are interacting in both obvious and subtle ways. The woman is dressed in arguably fancy attire – wearing a yellow dress complete with jewelry accents. She is in an embrace with the youthful man on the viewer's right, who is wearing an equally fancy outfit in a light pink color. Though the man seems to be gazing intently into her face, her head is turned away towards the viewer with a look of contemplation. On the other side of her is another man – reaching out to her with question in his eyes. She has not acknowledged him in this scene – but the viewer can tell she is obviously thinking about what he has to offer. This second suitor is not as

handsome as the first – he seems possibly older and slightly chubbier and sports a couple moles on the side of his face. He does not sport any visible jewelry or colorful clothing, yet his clothes still look to be made of a rich material. Also, in contrast with his competition, he is holding a small burlap bag of what seems to be money.

The figures are painted in a rather realistic sense; therefore the viewer can easily relate to or imagine the narrative occurring amongst this trio. The composition of the painting places the woman and the young man together as a couple, therefore dominating the scene. The second man (most likely a second suitor) seems to emerge from the shadows on the left, offering his wealth (as symbolized in the money bag) as a persuasion for marriage. Should she marry the man that she is head over heels for, makes her laugh, and brings flowers picked from the wild because he has no money to purchase them? Or should she marry the older gentleman who she barely knows and has been proposing to her now for years by bringing expensive gifts to her and her family? All these conjectures may be made by the viewer upon exploring the narrative.

Love or Money is documented as a copy after the Dutch painter, Cornelius van Haarlem. Van Haarlem's original work is documented as being entitled, *The choice between young and old*, and *The difficult choice*. (The discrepancies most likely have to do with preciseness of the translations and individual differences in interpretation from Dutch to English.) The title given to the copy owned by Krannert Art Museum also recognizes a choice and is more specific to what this difficult choice or difference between young and old might be – particularly a choice between *love* and *money*.

Van Haarlem was born in 1562 in Haarlem, a smaller city near Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He is known for being a stationary citizen – producing all of his work within his home town (McGee18). Van Haarlem's original piece was also signed and dated in 1594. The popularity of his piece is evident based on the several copies, both reproductions and alterations of his commentary on social morality (Van

Thiel 96).

The few art historians that have studied Van Haarlem's life and works have placed him as a Dutch Mannerist, and more specifically a Haarlem Mannerist (McGee 19). Van Haarlem and other Dutch and Haarlem Mannerists were said to have been influenced by a number of interests, including "Roman, Florentine, and Venetian Renaissance painting" (McGee, 20). Though he had never been to Italy, Van Haarlem had well rounded influences including the overall movement toward Realism among his fellow artists at the turn of the century (McGee, 19) It is evident upon first glance that *Love or Money* boasts a growing attention to Realism. The student or apprentice who most likely copied Van Haarlem's piece was possibly attempting to learn that very quality – just as an art student today studies an 'old master' painting in order to learn the technique of Realism.

Annotated
Question Plan:

Love or Money: Annotated Question Plan

Questions in "bold" & Annotations/suggestions in "italics"

Who are the characters/subjects in this painting?

Two men and a woman

Do you think there is a main subject in this painting?

Possibly the woman

Who do you think it is, and why?

The woman may be the main subject because she is in the center and the minority

**Can anyone guess what the title of this painting might be?
(without looking at the card)**

Open ended question.

Actual Title(s): "Love or Money", also "The Difficult

Choice” and “The Choice Between Young and Old”

Please explain why you chose that title.

What are some clues or hints the artist gives to lead you to know what is going on?

Money bag – How do we even know if it is money? Is it a symbol of wealth?

Embrace – may imply romance or a relationship

Can you imagine what the suitor on the left is thinking?

“Maybe if I give her money I can persuade her to like me...”

Can you imagine what the suitor on the right is thinking?

“I hope our love is enough...”

What might the young woman be thinking?

“Our love may not be enough to ensure my happiness and security”

Whom do you think she will choose? Why?

Open ended question

What is this woman’s dilemma?

She is possibly worried about her future security. If she marries the rich man she will be ‘secure’ financially but she may not be happy

Can you relate to this woman’s dilemma?

Open ended question

Do you think this is still a common/relatable issue today?

Why or why not?

What do you think occurred right before this picture?

The woman and her young suitor were “out courting” and they were interrupted by the older suitor who was coming to propose to the young woman.

Was there dialogue? What was said?

Students can explore this question through role playing

What do you think happens next? Who will she choose?

Open ended question

Tour Stop:

Priscilla Reisinger

Tour Stop

Overview:

The students will explore the painting, *Love or Money* in order to identify the characters in the painting and find their story. The students will imagine what the characters relationships and interactions are and create a narrative based on those conjectures.

Artworks:

Copy after Cornelius van Haarlem (1562–1638), Dutch

Love or Money, 1594

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. Louis Moss 1961

Supplies:

“Old Love–letter” handout – aged paper

Clipboards

Pencils

Procedures:

1. Docent will distribute stools and supplies to students
2. Students will sit in a semi-circle around the painting
3. Docent will begin ask questions that lead students to define the characters in the painting
 - Who are the characters/subjects in this painting?
 - Do you think there is a main subject in this painting?
 - Who do you think it is, and why?
4. Once students establish the identity of the subjects, the docent will continue to lead students in discussing the possible narratives within the painting.
 - Can anyone guess what the title of this painting might be? (without looking at the card) – Please explain why you chose that title.
 - What are some clues or hints the artist gives to lead you to know what is going on? (i.e. money bag – How do we even know if it is money? Is it a symbol of wealth?)
5. The Docent will continue to ask questions based on the direction students are taking the narrative. Some additional questions may be asked, such as:
 - Can you imagine what the suitor on the left is thinking?
 - Can you imagine what the suitor on the right is thinking?
 - What might the young woman be thinking?
 - Whom do you think she will choose?
 - What is this woman's dilemma/problem?
 - Can you relate to this woman's dilemma?
 - Do you think this is still a common/relatable issue today? Why or why not?
 - What do you think occurred right before this picture?
 - Was there dialogue? What was said?
 - What do you think happens next?
6. Once it seems the students have come to a conclusion about one or two possible narratives in

connection with the characters, the Docent will begin an activity with the students.

- “Now that you all have come up with some great possible narratives for this painting I want you all to choose and pretend to be a character in this painting.”
 - “Then, I want you to use the special paper on your clipboard to write a letter or a poem to a different character of your choice explaining your feelings – or lack of feelings for that person.”
 - “For example, if I chose to be the woman in the center – I am going to write a letter to either the man on the left or the right and explain why I do or do not like him.”
 - “As you are writing, remember to look at your character you chose and imagine what they might be thinking – and have fun with it! Use your imagination and be funny or serious, as long as it’s appropriate! At the end you may get a chance to read yours!”
7. Docent allows students 3–5 minutes to write their imaginary love /rejection letter.
 8. Docent will allow a few students to role-play and read their letters aloud.

Adaptations/Extra activity:

1. If audience is younger, the written portion of the activity will be dropped and students will do a role-playing activity instead.
- “Now that you all have come up with some great possible narratives for this painting I want you all to choose and pretend to be a character in this painting. We are going to put on a little show, and you get to be the characters in the painting!”
 - The Docent will ask student’s to who chose the older suitor to raise their hands and select one of them to stand up in front of the painting. The Docent will follow suit to select a woman and younger/poor suitor.

o The Docent will announce that the three students are now on a dating show and are going to answer questions based on their character's personality. The point of the show will be to help the woman decide who she wants to date/marry!

o The Docent will hold the microphone and assist the student who is playing the woman in interviewing her suitors. The Docent will allow the student to come up with the questions, but will be ready with helpful questions:

- "How old are you?"
- "What are some of your hobbies?"
- "Are you wealthy? Do you think you can support a family?"
- "Are you still living with your parents?"
- "What kind of home/estate do you have?"
- "Where would you take me on our first date?"
- "What are you looking for in a wife?"

Audience Study –
Kids@Krannert:

Priscilla Reisinger

ARTS 299

Kids @ Krannert Audience Study, December 9, 2008

Krannert Art Museum's event, *Kids at Krannert* was held at the museum on Saturday, December 6th from ten o'clock till noon. The two hour event was packed with children and parents who were exploring the museum and all the activities that the kids knew were just for them! The audience count was relatively high in comparison to the first *Kids at Krannert* because of the simultaneous *Saturday School* exhibition in the Link Gallery. So, in addition to all the regular attendees of *Kids at Krannert* there were many other parents and children who wandered in to check out the fun from the Link Gallery.

I observed children and families flowing from one activity to the next. All of the events, from the marble painting, to the comic-shadow playing, to the scavenger hunt, the children seemed very engaged. If the children seemed hesitant to try an activity, the parents or guardians would encourage the students to try it, but usually the children didn't need any coaxing and were literally dragging their parents around the museum to try everything. The audience overall seemed very comfortable and at home in the museum setting. The kid's seemed to realize that this was their special day, when the museum was all about them!

All of the parents that I talked to seemed very impressed and grateful for Kids at Krannert. One parent remarked that it was great for her and her children to experience the museum in the "non-traditional" sense. Both her and her children were very engaged in the activities and viewing the artworks as well, and it seemed evident that they appreciated the experience of being able to "be a kid" in the museum without being shushed and restricted.

Another neat aspect of *Kids at Krannert* that I saw at the event was the fact that Krannert was able to reach parents and catch their interest at the same time with their children. I saw many families doing the activities together. I think *Kids at Krannert* gets "2 birds with one stone" because it attracts two audiences at once. One of the mothers that I spoke with had never been to Krannert but came to the event for her son's sake. While she was there she seemed very interested in the artworks and asked me about the hours of the museum so she could know when to come back and visit. She also asked if they were allowed stay after the event to look at the art in the museum. Based on the audience studies that I collected I would say that *Kids at Krannert* was an overall success and should be continued and developed in the future.

Audience
Development of
College Students:

Priscilla Reisinger

ARTS 299

Student Audience Development Survey

Most of the students I interviewed for the Student Audience Development survey had only been to the Krannert Art Museum for a class they had in KAM's lecture room or for a class assignment. There seem to be many contributing factors to the reasons many students do not choose to visit the museum for leisure. It is not that the students do not have an overall negative view of the museum, rather they seem to be somewhat indifferent – they do not bother to overcome small obstacles such as checking their book-bag in order to see inside the museum.

Most students cited that they had all intentions of visiting the museum for the purpose of exploring it and seeing what it has to offer. However, some of the students are upperclassmen and have a fair amount of time to visit the museum – yet never acted on this intention. Some common inferences I gathered from my interviewees were that for the most part students did not know exactly what the museum had to offer. Some assumed Krannert was there for the art students, or housed mainly students' work. Others assumed Krannert held mainly archaeological or cultural artifacts as opposed to "fine art". It seems possible students simply don't have the right information about the museum or the right impression of the museum.

The majority of the students I spoke with have "been to" the Krannert Art Museum for a class in the lecture room of Krannert's basement or to study & grab coffee and lunch at the Espresso Royale in the Pallet Café. From their vantage point in the lobby area waiting for coffee or walking through the lower level for class, students reported seeing displays and exhibits that looked "cool" or interesting to them. Yet – many cited the inconvenience of checking their bag or getting rid of their food as keeping them from fully entering the museum to experience it. However students did agree that it was a good idea for Krannert to have a café as well as hold U of I classes in their lecture hall because it is a good/main way to draw students and pique their interest.

One student did visit the museum with her boyfriend simply for leisure. She also attended the Pygmalion music

festival with her boyfriend. She spoke of her experience as a fun and interesting activity. Her reasons for choosing to visit Krannert were based on the fact that the museum was free and was a new and different thing to do around campus.

Audio Guide
Script:

Priscilla Reisinger

Allison Hammer

Audio Guide

Copy after Cornelius van Haarlem (1562–1638), Dutch

Love or Money, 1594

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. Louis Moss 1961

P: This work, entitled *Love or Money*, depicts a woman forced to make a decision between the two men on either side of her. The woman is dressed in fancy attire wearing a yellow dress complete with jewelry accents. She is in an embrace with the youthful man on the right, who is wearing an equally fancy outfit in a light pink color.

A: The man on the right is gazing intently into the woman's face, while her gaze is turned towards you with a look of contemplation. To her left stands another man – not as handsome as the first and possibly older – reaching out to her with question in his eyes. She has not acknowledged him in this scene – but you can tell she is thinking about what he has to offer.

P: He does not sport any visible jewelry or colorful clothing, yet his clothes appear to equally luxurious. He is slightly distanced from the other two figures and he is holding a small burlap bag possibly containing money. He seems to emerge from the shadows on the left, offering his wealth (symbolized by the money bag) as a proposition for marriage.

A: However, the woman is in an embrace with the younger man on the right. They are coupled together yet the woman

looks away indecisively. She gazes outwardly as if contemplating her future with either one of the men. The subtle/vague interactions of the characters leave the conflict open for interpretation.

P: One interpretation of this conflict could be that the young woman is contemplating her future security in wedlock based on the wealth of her suitors. She appears in love with the man on the right because they are embracing. He is young and handsome, while the other man is older yet wealthy. Which would you choose?

A: Others view the conflict in a more sinister light. It is possible that the woman is already married to the wealthy older man. In this interpretation she appears to be seducing the younger man, possibly to have him kill her husband or rob him of his money.

P: This painting *Love or Money* was inspired by the 15th century Dutch artist, Cornelius van Haarlem. Van Haarlem's original work is documented as being entitled, *The choice between young and old*, and *The difficult choice*. (The translations of the title differ in interpretation from Dutch to English.) But the theme is still the same – the age old decision between love and money.

A: From 15th century Dutch society to present day society – the issue of “love or money” is still evident. Can you imagine yourself having to choose between the two?

Audience Study –
ARTzilla:

Priscilla Reisinger

ARTzilla Audience Study

November 14, 2008

Krannert Art Museum's event ARTzilla was held Friday evening on November 14. The event ran from 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm and housed many activities. The focus of the event was to provide visitors means to explore the museum through many interactive activities and experiences. Most of the events were connected directly to the exhibitions while some of them simply served to be fun activities to attract an audience. Based on the demographic majority of

visitors who attended, it is clear that the target audience for ARTzilla was underclassmen college students. There were a few attendees who seemed to be slightly older – possibly graduate students – yet the majority seemed to be freshmen and sophomore undergraduate students. Aside from the uniformity in age-range, the audience seemed to be quite diverse.

Those who attended seemed to come in mixed groups of gender, but non-mixed in terms of ethnicity. Throughout the evening I saw several African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Indian groups and couples. There were most likely those of other ethnicities present, yet without taking a demographic survey of the entire audience I can only make limited “educated-conjectures” – all this to say, take note that demographic information gathered in this fashion should be taken with a grain of salt.

The groups of students traveled around the museum throughout the evening, exploring the many artworks and activities alike. The two stations I worked at were the food & beverage as well as the origami station. Both activities seemed to be quite popular with the attendees. Many students took full advantage of the food and drinks, while some looked a little sheepish while helping themselves to seconds – as if they were unsure of how much food & drink was appropriate to take. The origami station attracted lots of people – as it was the first activity visible on the main level of Krannert Art Museum. Many visitors stopped for a good while to work on creating an origami piece with their friends. This station proved a good opportunity to talk with the visitors and interview them about their experience at ARTzilla so far.

Many of the students that I interviewed seemed very pleased with the event and glad to be there. A majority of them had taken time to explore all of the activities that ARTzilla had to offer, as well as look through the numerous gallery exhibits. When asked how they found out about the event, some said through *facebook*, some through flyers, and some thorough friends/word of mouth. The event seemed to leave an overall good impression of Krannert Art Museum upon the students. The students were grateful to

have something interesting, new and different to do on a Friday night, and were overall impressed with Krannert Art Museum. Most students did not have any suggestions for improvement to the Museum or future events. However one young man who did not fit the 'young college' demographic suggested that he would enjoy an event that had a more 'adult' atmosphere. Having graduated college already he felt he didn't fit into the 'college kid' category so he could not relate completely to the ARTzilla event. Nonetheless, he stated his high opinion and regard for Krannert Art Museum's professional and diverse nature and hopes to attend an event in the future that is geared more towards his demographic.

Event Response –
Additional Event:

Priscilla Reisinger

ARTS 299

Event Response #2

The Architecture of New Museums in the U.S.

The second event I attended at Krannert Art Museum was a lecture titled, *The Architecture of New Museums in the U.S.* The event was held in the auditorium in the lower level of the Krannert Art Museum on Thursday evening at six o'clock. There were about 25 – 30 people in attendance. The audience was scattered throughout the rows of seating in the auditorium in small groups or clusters. I arrived a few minutes early and noticed many of the people commenting to each-other back and forth across the room from their seats, which gave me the impression that most of them knew each other. I later learned that the lecture was hosted by the Krannert board, which explained the fact that most of the audience knew each-other and were in their middle-ages and upwards. There were a handful of college students attending the lecture, most of whom were with me observing the event as well, and one other student/young person that I did not recognize. There was also one young girl (middle-school or junior high age) in attendance with a man who I assumed to be her father.

The visiting professor who gave the lecture had an overall

interesting and insightful presentation. Despite a few technical difficulties with the light and sound adjustments, the event seemed to flow smoothly. The lecturer discussed 7 new art museums that had been built within the past 5 years – and their positive affect on museum patronage and attraction. The museums he discussed were; The Contemporary Art Museum (St. Louis), The Figge Art Museum (Davenport, Iowa), The Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston), The Akron Art Museum (Ohio), The New Museum (New York, NY), The Contemporary Jewish Museum, and The Yale Sculpture Gallery. One interesting statistic shared was that over a set period of time (one year, I believe) Museum visits totaled 850 million compared to the 140 million visits to sporting events!

After the lecture some members of the audience asked questions about the presentation. After as small amount of discussion in the auditorium, the audience was directed outside to continue their discussions and mingle over wine and hors d'oeuvres. Overall the event was interesting, informative, and a pleasant way to spend a Thursday evening!

Final Paper:

Something for Everybody?

Museums in Action, ARTS 299

December 9, 2008

Priscilla Reisinger

In progressive American society, educational institutions are subject to continual introspection in order to remain current with the contemporary culture. In this regard, I believe the institution of the art museum holds a unique place in public education because it must serve the grater community as a whole, as opposed to an institution such as an elementary school or a children's museum that

serves only a specific demographic. However, because the art museum is an institution of voluntary learning, it faces the unique and challenging issue of maintaining a positive public perception. The function and existence of the art museum is dependent upon its audience, therefore the most critical issue a museum should address is “who are art museums for?”

Because the museum is often dependant on its patronage to continue functioning, the image of the art museum – as perceived by the public – is crucial to its existence. However, museum educators face a catch–twenty–two in this situation. In order to attract a wealthy and financially supportive audience, museums must host events and exhibitions that cater toward that demographic. On the other hand these practices often portray an elitist image – thus inadvertently excluding a demographic of lower socio–economic status. Unless the museum gives off the proper image, certain demographics and people groups simply will not show interest.

Historically art museums have no trouble attracting educated and wealthy patrons. However, since the late twentieth century museums have progressively turned towards reaching a broader audience. Still, the image of the elitist institution has been hard to shake for many art museums. This is evidenced in the actual demographics of art museum patronage. *Making Museums Better Learning Experiences*, a publication by Falk & Dierking discusses a demographical dilemma in which an area of predominantly African American citizens held the minority patronage at the local museum. Despite the low turnout of certain demographics, the museum still desired to serve the greater community as an institution of learning and so they geared their exhibitions towards the interests and history of the local African American community. Falk & Dierking go on to discuss a vast amount of possible engaging exhibitions that might draw a certain audience, however it is important not to gloss over the museum’s initial lack of approachability from the public perspective in order to gain

new understanding as museums continue to evolve.

An important issue that needs to be addressed here is the cause of the elitist image of the museum. This image leads to the perceived inapproachability of the art museum from the perspective of those who are new to art or the museum scene. This is where we find the root of the problem. If people did not feel intellectually threatened by the art museum, or did not automatically associate or stereotype art as boring or non-stimulating then museum educators and curators would have no problem bringing people of all nationalities, genders, ages, socio-economic status', and interests through the doors of the museum.

Why then, does a major portion of the public see the art museum in this light? First of all, I think both this question and the answer are compound and most likely contain multiple possible solutions. The portrayal of museums as an exclusive institution that serves only the wealthy and the educated is perpetuated by today's popular culture and media. Unfortunately, art museums cannot control the way they are portrayed in movies or television, so they must instead address the problem from the inside-out. In a way the traditional art museum may have to re-invent its public image in order to reach out to the greater community.

Still, museums face yet another problem - the age old dilemma of trying to please everybody. We've all been told that it's simply not possible. However, I believe that the purpose of the museum is to reach out to everyone. Public service is in a sense engrained into the DNA of the museum. If the art museum does not attempt to reach out to all members of the community then it is not fulfilling its purpose. This is not to say that art museums must get a certain percentage of all demographics through their doors or else they are not doing their job. Art museums cannot force people to be interested in art, but they can certainly make the public feel welcome by becoming publicly engaged. I believe the engaged art museum is a *publicly* (not exclusively) engaged museum - and is truly defined as having "something for everybody."

In order for the art museum to engage its visitor it must portray itself as a welcoming environment and provide experiences that the visitor can relate to. In Louis Lankford's *Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums*, he discusses the constructivist museum model. (Lankford) This model applied in the art museum helps viewers have unique aesthetic experiences without being threatened. Instead visitors are able to connect their experiences within the art museum with their own previous life experiences. Here the art museum faces yet another dichotomy as they begin to figuratively open their doors. Museum educators seem to face opposition no matter which method or approach they use. If educators and curators attempt to welcome and reach those who are unfamiliar with the arts by providing supplementary material, guides, or activities – they may be criticized by regular or traditional patrons for tainting the sanctuary or shrine-like quality of the art museum. However, if they aim to please only their traditional patrons by clearing the museum of all “clutter” except for the artworks and the patrons themselves – they risk the removal of any aesthetic experience whatsoever for the viewer that has little or no prior knowledge of art (whom might actually benefit from additional museum guidance material and activities).

Lankford believes that in our contemporary society, museum education has become central, rather than peripheral to the museum patron's experience. However, within the constructivist museum, the museum educator is not the dictator – rather they are “a collaborator in the meaning-making process”. (Lankford) Instead of dictating what the museum visitor's experience or conclusion about the art the museum educator should present the art in a way that is “capturing imagination, provoking the thought, stimulating the curiosity and connecting with the prior experience of each museum visitor.” Thus, the visitors become the meaning makers of their own aesthetic experience. (Lankford)

Falk & Dierking also looks at a case study of a young boy who visited the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. In the study the young boy shares his experiences in the museum

with much excitement and explains how he related things he saw to what he already knew. This is a prime example of the education and experience that art museums ought to facilitate. It is important for the progressive art museum to put the learner first by creating a place of learning and discovery where one can build on their experiences and learning, as opposed to a lofty shrine which a visitor feels they can never attain an understanding or appreciation.

Falk & Dierking also give the example of an engaging children's museum that facilitates learning by first drawing the child in. The image of the children's museum is a ready-made invitation for all children of the world to enter its doors. Since the museum is made for children, children instinctively know it is just for them. Everything is "kid-sized" and formatted attractively from a child's perspective. There are no pre-requisites for visiting these museums and children know it. They feel free to visit, explore, and coincidentally, learn! (Falk & Dierking)

In order for a patron to have that same experience and freedom of exploration that a child has in a children's museum, art museums must untangle themselves from the idea that the visitor of the art museum must hold prior knowledge of the arts or be a cultured and learned individual. The history of art itself and the art museum lends itself to prestige and elitism, which can serve discourage the potential and curious visitor from stepping into the unknown. Through the use of the contextual model and continual public engagement the art museum can and will be able to facilitate that desired place of learning, discovery, and aesthetic experiences. In doing so the art museum will begin to take on the image of a place having something for everybody, with its doors wide open to the world.

Works Cited

Lankford, E. Louis. "Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums" Journal of Aesthetic Education. 36. 2 (2002): 140-153.

Falk, John H., and Lynn D. Dierking. Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and Making of Meaning. American

Association for State and Local History book series. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000.